

Pastors have many responsibilities. They must provide direction and leadership in the church community, and they must listen and give council. But the primary role of a pastor, as Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:1-2, is to proclaim the word of God. This is why we come to church. Preaching God's word is a priority because it is the only sure means by which we know what God is saying to us. God can sometimes speak to us through testimonies and sharing, through our experiences, and through songs; but these are only valid if they agree with the Bible. It is foundational to our faith, and we must not take it for granted. In the past, many of us used to carry a Bible to church, maybe even with a pen or notebook to take notes with. But today, many people prefer to use electronic Bibles. Though they have the capability to highlight and make comments in these electronic Bibles, who actually does? Even in Sunday school when I provide handouts, many people don't bother to fill in the blanks. Nowadays, we don't care to invest the energy to study or even remember Biblical truth. But Psalm 19 reminds us just how important God's word is.

Psalm 19 is divided into two sections. The first section, vv. 1-6, declares how the universe is such an awesome communication tool to tell us about the existence of God. The psalm uses language that points us back to Creation. The words for the heavens, skies, day and night (Psalm 19:1-2) are the same words used to describe creation in Genesis 1:1, 5, and 6. Verses 4-6 focus on the sun that God created. He compares the rising sun at dawn to a bridegroom, who comes out of the tent during the wedding ceremony, similarly to the way the bride comes through the doors in modern weddings. We are dependent on the sun for light, warmth, and energy. We take it for granted, but rely on it for everything. Plants and flowers all orient themselves toward the sun, and we orient our sleep cycle based on the sun's cycle. It's not by accident that the sun provides so much for us. In ancient times people would worship the sun for this reason, but the psalm says that although the sun is awesome, the One who made it is even greater. It is no accident that everything in the universe is so finely tuned to enable us to survive and thrive. The greatness of creation points us to the greatness of the Creator. Romans 1:18-20 says that God's power and divine nature are seen through His creation. This is called General Revelation, how God reveals Himself to everyone.

Then in v. 7 there is a sudden change in topic to Special Revelation, which is the word of God. General Revelation tells us that a powerful Creator exists, but Special Revelation tells us who He is. Our God is Yahweh. In v.1 God is referred to using the general word for a supreme being, but starting from v. 7 He is referred to by His name, Yahweh (translated as the LORD). If General Revelation is amazing, then the word of God is even better. Verses 7-9 tell us that God's word revives the soul, it gives wisdom and joy, it enlightens us, it endures forever, and it is righteous. Scientists spend so much time studying creation to understand how amazing it is, but theologians already came to that conclusion, because they know that the Creator is amazing. Studying creation gives us information, but studying God's word feeds the soul. It's a shame that we take it for granted as much as we do. If your soul is not revived, if you are lacking joy or feeling distant from God, it's likely that this is correlated with a lack of time spent in God's word. There is nothing else that can feed your spirit. Scripture is freely available; it's not hidden. But it takes effort to study it. You can't learn it by osmosis. But Psalm 19 guarantees that if you invest in the word of God and live by it, you will be revived. This is why v. 10 says that it is so precious and sweet.

Verses 12-14 conclude the psalm by asking God to prevent sin. These hidden faults are revealed by Scripture. It is only when you know the word of God that you will recognize what things in your life drive a wedge between you and God. Then you can be mindful of these things and address them through prayer. We all need the direction that comes from God's word. So dust off your Bible and dive into it. Don't be like a baby who relies on parents to feed. It's time to feed ourselves as well. Ingest the word of God, and you will see that it reveals our amazing God in even deeper ways than all the wonders of creation can.